

REMARKS

Claims 1, 6, 8 and 15 have been amended, and claims 5 and 18 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 3-4, 6-15 and 17 remain in the application.

Claims 1 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Byrnes et al (U.S. 5,449,152), and the remaining claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) and being unpatentable over Byrnes et al, in view of De Antonio et al, McGuire, and Olsen.

Claims 1 and 15 have been amended to include the limitations of claims 5 and 18 which have been cancelled. It is believed that amended claims 1 and 15 distinguish over Byrnes et al and De Antonio et al considered individually or in combination.

Due to the axially facing, meniscus shaped, end faces of each sleeve of the claimed device, the claimed invention geometry is different from that of Byrnes' devices.

The invention further distinguishes over Byrnes by the fact that each sleeve is preloaded in compression between two rigid rings: the internal sleeve is preloaded between the internal ring and the intermediate ring; and the external sleeve is preloaded between the intermediate ring and the external ring.

De Antonio teaches (col. 1, lines 30-45) that preloading a sleeve between two rings results in deforming one of the rings - the external ring -, and therefore necessitates machining the ring to make it circular (in cross section) again.

It is therefore submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art having knowledge of Byrnes and De Antonio, would be incited not to preload the damper of Byrnes having

several elastomer layers and cylindrical metal shims between the elastomer plies (Byrnes col. 5, lines 28-32), since this would necessitate machining each of the shims.

Furthermore, De Antonio is silent as regards dampers having several elastomer layers.

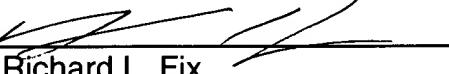
No additional claim fee is required by this Amendment.

In view of the above, it is believed that all remaining claims are in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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